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RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 4366
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5633
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1834
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 3761
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2914
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 001613

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PREF](#) [EAID](#) [KSEC](#) [KDEM](#) [BT](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: HOME MINISTER TRYING TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER

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Classified By: Classified By: Ambassador Nancy J. Powell. Reasons 1.4
(b/d).

Summary

1. (C) On August 23 Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula told the Ambassador that the violent activities of the Maoists and of Madhesi splinter groups in the Terai were among many challenges to the Constituent Assembly election. Sitaula said that the Government of Nepal (GON) was attempting to re-start a dialogue with the Terai groups but acknowledged that election security would be difficult in 5 or 6 districts in the Terai if the splinter groups remained unwilling to enter into a dialogue. The Home Minister stressed that the peace process had reached a critical stage; transforming the Maoists into a peaceful political party was proving difficult. The Ambassador requested the Ministry's cooperation with a U.S. senior police in Nepal to determine the best use of U.S. funds to support the GON's election security efforts and requested the Ministry's cooperation. The Ambassador told Sitaula that the U.S. wanted to move forward with the Bhutanese refugee resettlement program and looked forward to the Home Ministry providing the necessary additional security in the camps.

Challenges to Election Security

2. (C) On August 23 during her first meeting with Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula, the Ambassador stressed that the Home Ministry had a huge role to play in securing a free and fair Constituent Assembly election and that the U.S. wanted to support the Ministry's efforts to ensure a secure election. Sitaula stated that there were many challenges to law and order; the most significant being the continuing violent behavior and threats of the Maoist and of the Madhesi splinter groups in the Terai. The Home Minister explained that the Government of Nepal (GON) was trying to restart a dialogue with the Terai groups, but commented that he was not sure they were willing to participate in talks. Sitaula noted that the violent Madhesi groups all shared a Maoist background, making it more difficult to bring them into a dialogue. Sitaula noted that it would be very difficult to

hold the elections in five or six districts in the Terai if these groups refused to negotiate.

Peace Process at Critical Point

13. (C) The Home Minister stressed that the peace process had reached a critical point. He stated that the Maoists were trying to "disturb" the situation and that a "misunderstanding" had arisen between the Maoists and the parties. However, Sitaula also acknowledged that there was discord among the Seven-Party Alliance. The Home Minister stated that he believed the situation was changing and that there was a "new scenario." When questioned, the Home Minister stated that it was very difficult to transform a "left force," i.e. the Maoists, into a peaceful group capable of cooperating in a democratic government. In response to the Ambassador's concerns about the Maoist threats to derail the peace process and the election, the Home Minister responded that the Maoists did not have the support of the people.

U.S. Offers Election Security Support

14. (C) The Ambassador informed the Home Minister a U.S. senior police advisor was now here in Nepal assessing how U.S. funds (International Narcotics and Law Enforcement funds) could best support the GON's election security efforts. She also emphasized the need for the Home Ministry's cooperation in executing of Letter of Agreement outlining the use of the funds.

Resettlement Program Must Move Forward

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15. (C) The Ambassador reaffirmed that the U.S. was very interested in moving forward with the Bhutanese refugee resettlement program. She stressed that security in the refugee camps was a major concern and thanked the Home Minister for his commitment to provide additional security forces in the camps. The police posts needed to be established as quickly as possible.

Concern Regarding Forceful Return of Tibetan Refugee

16. (C) The Ambassador told Sitaula that Washington had shown concern regarding the recent refoulement of a Tibetan refugee. The Home Minister assured the Ambassador that Nepal's policy regarding Tibetan refugees had not changed and would remain consistent in the future.

Comment

17. (C) The Home Minister's vague talk about a "new" scenario with the Maoists seemed to imply that even he is having concerns about the Maoists' willingness to deliver on their promises. Although Sitaula is no longer formally the Seven-Party Alliance's chief peace negotiator, in practice he still fulfills that role at times with respect to the Maoists. He probably also recognizes that his own political fate is closely tied to theirs. The Maoists continuing use of violence undermines his own already tenuous political position. Rumors abound that Sitaula may be relieved of duty in the next cabinet reshuffle.

POWELL